

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 3, 2009

The Honorable Allan Mollohan
Chairman
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
Appropriations Committee
H-310 Capitol
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mollohan and Ranking Member Wolf:

We urge you to provide \$5 million in the FY 2010 CJS appropriations bill for the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program, a competitive grant program that helps local communities and law enforcement officials quickly identify persons with Alzheimer's disease who wander away from home and reunite them with their families.

Approximately 5 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease, and the majority of them live at home under the care of family and friends. It is estimated that 60 percent of Alzheimer's patients are likely to wander away from their homes. Wanderers are vulnerable to dehydration, weather conditions, traffic hazards, and individuals who prey on vulnerable seniors. Up to 50 percent of wandering Alzheimer's patients will become seriously injured or die if they are not found within 24 hours of their departure from home.

Since its inception more than 10 years ago, the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program has funded a national registry of more than 172,000 individuals at risk of wandering and has reunited over 12,000 wanderers with their families. It is a highly successful program whereby 88% of registrants who wander are found within the first four hours of being reported missing. A total of 1,288 wandering incidents were reported to the program in 2007. The program has a 98% success rate in recovering enrollees who are reported missing.

There are also technology-based options to address wandering that should be able to receive funding under this program. For example, personalized wristbands that emit a tracking signal can be used to locate wanderers. These wristbands, when combined with specially trained search and rescue teams, can reduce search times from days or hours to minutes.

On February 10th of this year, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 908, the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program Reauthorization Act, by a voice vote. H.R. 908 updates and expands the program to include technology-based options in addition to a national registry. The bill authorizes \$5 million per year in appropriations for FY 2010 through FY 2016. We expect the Senate to act on this legislation soon.

The Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program protects the safety of thousands of Americans affected by Alzheimer's disease and provides priceless peace-of-mind to their families. It saves local law enforcement officials valuable time and allows them to focus on other security concerns.

We therefore urge you to provide \$5 million for the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program in FY 2010. Families across the country are counting on your support for this small but effective program.

Sincerely,

Mayor Alito

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Edward J. Markey

Chris Smith

Adam B. Schiff

Paul H. Davis

Shelley Berkley

John Lewis

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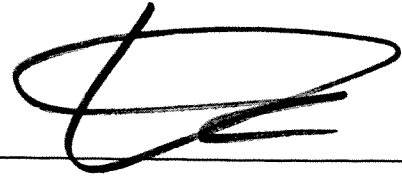
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